

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-32 (Cancelled)

33. (Currently Amended) A skin cosmetic composition comprising:
hydrogel particles dispersed in an aqueous medium, wherein each of said hydrogel particles comprises a non-crosslinked hydrogel having an oil component dispersed therein, and wherein said aqueous medium has a viscosity of 300 to 5000mPa•s at 25° C and a specific gravity of 0.7 to 2.0, wherein said hydrogel particles are prepared by a process comprising:

providing an emulsion or dispersion of components comprising a non-crosslinked hydrogel-forming polymer, the oil component and water; and
discharging said emulsion or dispersion through an orifice into a cooling oil under conditions sufficient to provide droplets, which are cooled in said cooling oil after formation.

34. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein said discharging step is performed simultaneously with application of vibrations.

35. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 34, wherein said application of vibrations is performed by a member selected from the group consisting of applying vibration to said orifice, applying vibration directly to said emulsion or dispersion, and applying vibration to a liquid column discharged from said orifice.

36. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 34, wherein said vibrations are at a frequency of from 1 to 2000 Hz.

37. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein said orifice has a diameter of from 0.1 to 5 mm.

38. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein said emulsion or dispersion is at a temperature above the gelation temperature prior to discharging through said orifice and is cooled to below said gelation temperature thereafter.

39. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein said droplets have a shape having rotation symmetry.

40. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 39, wherein said droplets are spherical.

41. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein said emulsion or dispersion further comprises an emulsifying agent or a dispersing agent.

42. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein the non-crosslinked hydrogel is made of agar or gelatin.

43. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 41, wherein the emulsifying agent or dispersing agent comprises a polymer emulsifying or dispersing agent.

44. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein the oil component comprises a solid fat, and the melting point of the oil component is not less than 35° C.

45. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein the oil component comprises a solid ceramide or an analog thereof.

46. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein not less than 80% by weight of the hydrogel particles have a ratio of a longest diameter to a shortest diameter (longest diameter/shortest diameter) of not more than 1.7.

47. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein the hydrogel particle has a breaking intensity of 2 to 40kPa and a Young's modulus of 10 to 150 kPa.

Application No. 09/892,577
Reply to Office Action of February 23, 2005

48. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein the non-crosslinked hydrogel is made of agar having a gel strength of not more than 68.6 kPa.

49. (Previously Presented) The skin cosmetic composition of claim 33, wherein the skin cosmetic composition is a lotion.

50. (Cancelled)